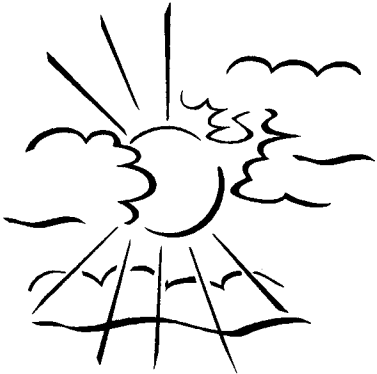


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



Articles in Today's Clips

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

TOPIC	PAGE
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-7
Elder Abuse/Care	8-10
Juvenile Justice	11
Food Assistance	12-13
Adoption	14
Home Ownership	15
Volunteerism	16

*Important story at this spot

Plainwell man charged in child-abuse case

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

rhall@kalamazoogazette.com 388-7784

A Plainwell man has been charged with child abuse and assault after his girlfriend's 4-year-old son was treated last month at Bronson Methodist Hospital for a ruptured bowel, authorities said. Investigators with the Plainwell Department of Public Safety and the Michigan Department of Human Services have been looking into the case since July 29, when Thomas William Webb, 33, reportedly dropped the boy off at the boy's father's home.

A short time later, police said, the father noticed the boy was becoming ill and took him to Bronson, where doctors described the boy's injuries as "high-impact trauma to his bowel area." Webb was arraigned in Allegan County District Court Thursday on one count of first-degree child abuse and one count of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder. He is being held in the Allegan County Jail on \$50,000 bond. Police said the boy was released from the hospital Sunday and is recovering at home.

Boy's injuries investigated

Tuesday, August 09, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

PLAINWELL –

Police say they have not determined why a 33-year-old allegedly brutalized a 4-year-old boy in his care -- requiring the child to undergo emergency surgery for serious trauma to his stomach. Thomas William Webb is charged with first-degree child abuse, said Plainwell Public Safety Director Bill Bomar. The boy, the son of Webb's girlfriend, has a 6-year-old brother who is considered a witness but was not physically harmed, police said. Police were called July 29 by Child Protective Services after the boy's father took him to the hospital. He believed his son had the flu, but also was concerned about bruising. Police said Webb has not cooperated with investigators.

State: Child's problems should have been known

Tuesday, August 09, 2005

By Nate Reens Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- State foster home regulators contend administrators at a Grand Rapids care center should have known a girl who died under its care last year presented difficulty on off-site trips.

Family Independence Agency investigators have filed a supplemental finding in an investigation of 10-year-old Jacquelyn Reah's death last November, claiming the girl repeatedly caused problems on Grand Rapids Public Schools buses and while in her foster mother's car over a four-year span.

Jacquelyn died Nov. 27 while on a shopping trip. The girl fled from a center-owned van and ran across Int. 96, where she was struck by a motorist.

In the state's report, an investigator details the girl's past transgressions, including being barred from school buses for assaulting students and drivers, trying to get off the bus and breaking windows.

A school social worker and a transportation aide assigned to oversee Jacquelyn while she was on the bus made the claims that the girl "posed a threat of harm to herself and others, both in school and while being transported."

The state report says there was a history of problems while the girl was being shuttled to and from school. The findings support investigators' contentions that St. John's lacked sufficient staffing for the shopping trip.

The additional investigation was spurred by a Press article in which David Van Rooy, executive director of St. John's home, said center employees could not have predicted or prevented the girl's death. St. John's home, at 2355 Knapp St. NE, is a residence for troubled children who are wards of the state.

The transportation aide contacted state officials to tell them a different story, informing them of the girl's past.

Van Rooy could not be reached for comment.

However, in an earlier interview, he said center employees acted appropriately in trying to discipline Jacquelyn, who allegedly grabbed the wheel of the transport van and assaulted the supervisor in charge of the trip.

"Sometimes you can do everything right, and the kids surprise you," Van Rooy said in April.

"This was surely not anything that could have reasonably been foreseen or prevented."

St. John's is disputing the alleged licensing violations and Van Rooy has said a third-party investigator, hired by the home, didn't believe the violations could be substantiated.

Killing children

Grand Rapids Press

August 9, 2005

To the editor

I hope that justice is served swiftly and severely for little Aiyana Cisneros. My heart aches to think she suffered for two days before finally succumbing to the injuries inflicted on her.

How could anyone harm a helpless child?

Is this to serve as "another " wake-up call to protective services to rethink their criteria? How many more children have to suffer before something positive is done?

May God have mercy on us all if we can't protect the innocent ones who depend on us. As concerned citizens, parents, grandparents and neighbors we need to be more vigilant when we suspect abuse. I feel for the neighbor who tried to help. She did what she could legally. She tried. The laws need to be changed defining the criteria for abuse before another life is lost.

KAY BURGHDOFF/ Hastings

Parents Could Face Charges For Wandering Child

4-Year-Old Placed In Protective Services

POSTED: 10:18 am EDT August 9, 2005

The parents of a 4-year-old boy who was found wandering Monday night could face neglect charges.

The boy was found by patrolling officers in the area of Berkshire and Somerset roads on the city's east side at about 8:15 p.m., Local 4 reported. Police released a photograph of the boy to local media in an attempt to locate the boy's family.

The mother and father came forward separately to claim the child, Local 4 reported. The child had been placed in protective services.

The parents are expected to appear in court Tuesday morning.

The family's name was not released.

Copyright 2005 by ClickOnDetroit.com.

2-year-old dies from crash injuries

The Muskegon Chronicle

Tuesday, August 09, 2005

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

A 2-year-old boy who was hit by a car near his home Saturday evening died late Monday afternoon at DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids.

Drevon Bennett, of 2420 Wood, was the son of Destiny Bennett and Dyreese Knight.

No funeral arrangements were available this morning.

The boy's mother was not home when the accident occurred, and the child had been left in the care of his father, according to a Muskegon Heights police report. Knight told police he thought the boy was in the house until he was told that his son had been hit by a car.

The accident was reported by a neighbor, police said.

Knight said he and his son were in the bedroom, and the boy must have walked out of the house when he heard an ice cream truck coming down the street, according to the police report.

The driver of the car that struck the boy was identified as 39-year-old Teresa London of 786 Evanston.

The police report said it appeared she could not have stopped in time to avoid hitting the child.

However, **police are continuing to investigate** the 7:06 p.m. accident and also are looking into **"why the child was outside without supervision,"** Lt. Lynne Gill said this morning.

The death was the ninth this year on Muskegon County roads.

Published August 9, 2005

Family: Attorney fails to account for \$350K in estate Guardian for Eaton Co. cases can't be found

By Kelly Hassett
Lansing State Journal

CHARLOTTE - An Eaton County attorney is accused of failing to account for nearly \$350,000 in a deceased Lansing woman's estate that he was assigned to protect, according to a lawyer for the woman's family.

Charles Zwick, 56, of Charlotte closed several bank accounts belonging to 92-year-old Wilma Southwell, who had Alzheimer's, according to a petition filed by her family in June in Eaton County Probate Court.

Zwick, who did not respond to numerous requests for comment, failed to show for a July 22 probate court hearing when the family's attorney, Philip Vilella, asked Judge Michael Skinner for a judgment of \$340,000 to \$350,000 against Zwick.

Zwick, Eaton County's court guardian, is appointed to manage the assets of people who are unable to do so, said Mike Kutas, administrator for circuit and probate court.

Many of those cases involve people receiving Social Security benefits or Medicaid, and the guardian's responsibility includes filing regular inventory reports with the court, he said.

Calls made to Zwick's home and office Friday and Monday seeking comment were either not returned or not answered.

Zwick isn't around to explain Southwell's estate, Kutas said.

"There wasn't anything that brought a red flag to us about Charlie's cases until he disappeared," he said.

A sign on his Cochran Road office window Monday afternoon said the office is closed.

The lights were off, and piles of papers were scattered on desks.

Vilella said he has been unable to reach Zwick, but said he knows the Eaton County guardian knew about the hearing.

"The inquiry has gone on for quite some time," Vilella said. "I never expected that he would not show up."

Zwick hasn't been seen in Eaton County court - where's he been a fixture for years - since mid-July, Kutas said.

"It's a very, very strange case," Kutas said. "We don't know what happened."

Among the allegations in Vilella's filing:

- Starting in 2001, Zwick closed several of Southwell's bank accounts and never explained why or for what the money was used.
- Zwick never accounted for Southwell's car; instead, he sold it and listed it as income.
- Although Zwick said he paid personal income taxes for Southwell, he had no proof of filing 2002 or 2003 returns.

Vilella said he turned over his evidence to the Eaton County prosecutor's office. When asked about Zwick, Eaton County Prosecutor Jeffrey Sauter said there's a multi-agency investigation underway, but couldn't say who is under investigation or what the case is about. If it's found that money is missing, the next step would be to sue the estate's guardian for breach of fiduciary duty, Kutas said.

Contact Kelly Hassett at 267-1301 or khassett@lsj.com

Editorials & Letters

Elder-care in jeopardy

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SWARTZ CREEK

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, August 09, 2005

JOURNAL READER

The Michigan House and Senate have proposed cuts to the MI Choice home and community based waiver program ["Reality clashes with elder-care wants: At-home care favored, but state services may be cut," Region & State, July 14, Page A13]. This essential program lets people receive long-term care services where they want them - in their own homes instead of in nursing homes - at significant savings to the state.

Waiting lists to get into MI Choice already number more than 2,000 people around the state. Cutting funding for this program even further means thousands of people will be forced to move to expensive nursing homes or forced to stay in nursing homes because they are unable to return to their own homes unassisted.

A unanimous recommendation that MI Choice be expanded to meet consumer demand was issued in June by the governor's bipartisan Long Term Care Task Force. The Bush administration, the Granholm administration, many experts who have analyzed Michigan's outdated long-term care system, and many other states all recognize the overwhelming demand for and cost-effectiveness of home and community based care. The federal law says that states cannot force people to stay in institutions when they could be leading fuller lives in their own homes.

Why are our legislators the only people who do not understand?

Shelby J. Sherman
Swartz Creek

Curfew sweep nets 36 teens Police target gang activity in Ypsilanti Twp. ; more sweeps planned

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

BY AMALIE NASH

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

Washtenaw County Sheriff's deputies rounded up 36 teenagers accused of breaking Ypsilanti Township's curfew ordinance during a one-day sweep aimed at curbing gang activity in the area, officials said.

Police also issued 26 tickets to parents during the enforcement effort Friday night, holding the parents responsible for allowing their children to be out past curfew.

Sheriff's Cmdr. Dave Egeler said the curfew sweep was in response to potential increased gang activity in the Ypsilanti area. He said police are seeing more gang graffiti, larcenies and curbside gambling.

"In the last several weeks, it appears there has been an increase in possible gang activity in the Ypsilanti area, and this was an effort to start controlling some of that activity," Egeler said.

On Friday, deputies found 36 teens under the age of 18 on public streets in violation of the township's curfew rule, which requires that anyone under 18 be off the streets from 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. daily unless accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

The teens were arrested for the violations, and 26 tickets were issued to parents under the parental responsibility ordinance, which holds parents accountable for their children violating the township curfew, officials said.

Deputies also issued six citations for possession of tobacco, three for possession of drug paraphernalia, three for open intoxicants, two for minor in possession of alcohol and five for assorted misdemeanor offenses. In addition, five of the teens were wanted on bench warrants, two on felony warrants and two on juvenile pickup orders. One felony drug arrest was made, sheriff's officials said.

Police plan to conduct additional curfew sweeps before the summer is over, officials said.

Violations of the curfew ordinance are misdemeanors punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$100 fine.

Amalie Nash can be reached at anash@annarbornews.com or (734) 994-6832.

Waste Not, Want Not

By Sally Barber, Cadillac News

August 9, 2005

Hunger. It fuels a community's woes on every level, but solutions to the problem are within reach.

"Now that we know it can be solved, we are like race horses," said John Arnold, executive director for Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc. "Ring that bell and we will go."

Second Harvest partners with North West Gleaners Food Bank in Cadillac to alleviate hunger in our area. Their food charity programs are based on a 1994 and 1996 study conducted by Second Harvest and Michigan State University. The study determined whether communities adequately address the problem and how.

Research showed most communities have the means to end hunger, but fail in mobilizing resources and dispensing those resources.

This study was prompted by an earlier study in Kent County that identified the insidious damage caused to the social network by hunger and named it the No. 1 unmet need. When people are hungry, communities experience greater emergency room visits, disrupted classrooms, extra illnesses and more crime.

"In adults, there is a fair amount of domestic violence and child abuse traced back to the lack of food in the house," Arnold said.

Teens who suffer food insecurity are more likely to become pregnant, commit suicide, drop out of school, use drugs and take on fatalistic attitudes, he said. Prostitution, shoplifting and alcoholism are also, in many instances, traceable to lack of food.

"It's like a wellspring of poison and goes through the community affecting many people," he said.

The belief is poverty and hunger keep close company. The latest figures show one in nine people living in Michigan live at or below poverty level, according to Arnold. Second Harvest reports at any given moment, as many as 3,048 people in Wexford County are in the midst of a crisis that could impact their ability to put food on the table.

"There seems to be blindness and people don't realize we have hunger in our hometown," said

Laura Porter-Keller, branch manager for North West Gleaners Food Bank.

Gleaners is depending on people of the greater Cadillac area to become more sensitive to the problem of hunger. With commitment and effort, Porter-Keller believes it is possible to keep all area citizens fed.

The nonprofit organization distributes 35,000 pounds of food weekly to 103 pantries in its 10-county service area. It implements a modern model outlined by the Waste Not Want Not program to maximize resources and reduce the number of suffering people.

One measure calls for food pantries to garner greater amounts of food from the food banks, which can stock pantries at a lower cost than the pantries can otherwise purchase food. For \$5, Gleaners can provide two large bushel baskets filled with food, or 100 pounds.

The second measure involves erasing tradition and encouraging pantries to allow clients choice at food banks.

"If you let people pick and choose what they want, it cuts down on waste," Porter-Keller said.

Thirdly, Gleaners is working on enlisting additional food pantries to help distribute goods. More distribution channels mean more food is getting into the hands that need the help. If organizations lack space or facilities to distribute food, Gleaners will provide mobile pantry trucks.

Corporate and individual donations of food and funds remain important to keeping the community fed and everyone can partner in making the hunger problem go away, according to Porter-Keller.

"No donation is too small," she said. "Even little amounts help us out because you may feed one family, or five families."

The findings of the Waste Not Want Not project and a community workbook are available by sending a request to john@wmgleaners.org.

news@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

A Child Is Waiting

Tall 14-year-old is thoughtful, quiet

By Rosemary Dorr / Special to The Detroit News

"Be careful driving," Thaddius cautions his visitors as they leave. The tall 14-year-old is thoughtful, polite and ready to be helpful.

"Basically," says Thaddius, "I like to help people."

Thaddius adds, "I like working with kids. I like reading, going to church, singing, especially gospel, listening to music, playing video games and hanging out with my friends."

And he's eager to play basketball any time.

A 10th-grader-to-be, Thaddius likes school "because I know it will help me in the future," he says. "I might want to be a lawyer. I guess because I like to talk a lot," he jokes.

His foster mother of five months smiles since Thaddius is often quiet. She notes, "He needs to open up and share of himself," adding, "I want the best for him. Somebody that will truly love him, be understanding and give him structure. He is a loyal person and he will listen. I think he would be a good son."

Soon to be 15, Thaddius misses family ties. He sees adoption as "being put in a place surrounded by people who look after you, care for you and help you to grow up a good person."

His adoption worker hopes to find Thaddius such a family. Please consider, and talk with Lisa Avery at Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, (313) 883-7760.

Last column's child: Devonta, 12, is responsible and eager to be a "big brother" in a family. For information, call Amanda Csziao at The Christ Child House, (313) 584-6077, ext. 20.

A child is waiting appears Tuesdays in Features.

Home ownership slips from poor, moderate-income buyers

August 9, 2005

Detroit Free Press

BY JENNIFER C. KERR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- Housing prices are far outstripping salary increases for low- and moderate-income jobs, putting the American dream of owning a home beyond the reach of teachers, firefighters and other community workers in many cities, a study to be released today says. The report, by a coalition advocating affordable housing, found that even cities once considered affordable, such as Tulsa, Okla., are rapidly becoming too pricey for lower-income workers such as janitors and retail sales employees.

The study found the median price of a home in the United States rose 20% in just 18 months, to \$225,000. During the same period, wages for teachers, firefighters and nurses in most cities remained flat or increased slightly but still fell far short of the annual salary needed to buy a home, the report from the Center for Housing Policy said.

For example, the median household income for a nurse rose 10% between 2003 and 2005, to about \$36,000. Those salaries don't come close to the \$71,000 annual income needed to qualify to purchase a \$225,000 home. The number is based on a down payment of 10%.

"It's not just the level of housing prices versus wages, but the fact that, especially in some areas, the housing prices are growing so much faster," said Barbara Lipman, the research director for the center.

"It's creating this dynamic where people who work these jobs must feel like they'll never catch up. The dream of home ownership may be unattainable," she said.

The study looked at incomes for more than 60 occupations, from janitors to accountants. It examined housing prices for nearly 200 metropolitan areas from the fourth quarter of 2003 to the first quarter of this year.

The least affordable places in the country were the usual suspects: San Francisco, Orange County, Calif., New York and Boston.

Some of the most affordable places were in the Midwest, places like Saginaw; Waterloo, Iowa, and Lima and Youngstown, Ohio.

But Lipman said cities like Tulsa and Minneapolis, which had traditionally been more affordable, are now a concern.

"We're seeing a problem in areas where you'd expect and then beyond that because of the flatness of the wage growth and the increased pressures on home prices and rents," Lipman said. "Even though we have historically low interest rates, that doesn't solve the problem."

For more on the report, visit www.nhc.org/chp/p2p.

Service is citizenship lesson

The Grand Rapids Press

Tuesday, August 09, 2005

The academic experience of Michigan students needs to be more rigorous in and out of the classroom. State lawmakers should do their part by supporting Gov. Jennifer Granholm's idea of tying community service to the Michigan Merit Award scholarship. This type of learning teaches civic responsibility.

Community service is a component of Ms. Granholm's plan to restructure the Merit scholarship program. While she is mistaken in her proposed redirection of scholarship funds -- awarding them after two years of college instead of after high school -- she is right in proposing a link to community service. The governor's plan would require students receiving the awards to perform 40 hours of community service. The plan rightly gives districts the flexibility to define their policy. A stipulation of 40 hours over four years is neither unreasonable nor overly burdensome. Currently, students who attend in-state colleges receive \$2,500 for performing satisfactorily on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test. Eligibility for free money, regardless of the amount, should testify to more than good test scores but service rooted in character. Last August, the panel that oversees the scholarship program -- the Michigan Merit Award Board -- made service a condition of receiving the award. Attorney General Michael Cox has since ruled that the board does not have the authority to add the service requirement. This change, therefore, requires legislative approval, something lawmakers should give.

While not a requirement for graduation, many Grand Rapids area schools, both private and public, encourage community service. The Rockford Board of Education documents the transcripts of students who complete 40 hours of community service. Many students in the area already are actively engaged in community service through school organizations and church youth groups. Nationwide, schools have required students to perform community service before they receive a diploma. The Chicago Board of Education, for one, requires 40 hours of service to graduate.

Critics of the plan such as Rep. Brian Palmer, R-Macomb County, who requested Mr. Cox's opinion, say community service should be its own reward. Yes, it should be. But the same can be said of education, too. Youngsters, through a service requirement, can be taught the virtues of service in much the same way as they develop their minds and an appreciation for education through compulsory schooling.

The proposed service rule would ensure that all students who apply for the award -- including those least likely to participate voluntarily -- have an opportunity to help others and learn from it. The help would be welcomed by many charitable groups.

There is nothing wrong with asking a high schooler to read to a first-grader, clean up a lake, or help dish out a hot meal. Besides the direct help to a needy person or cause, the help connects youngsters with the world they are learning about in the classroom. It can open the door to career possibilities and lead students to a lifetime of civic engagement. Many lawmakers know the benefits, having contributed time and effort themselves. The lesson is worth passing on to the young.